

Montana Women Their Future Role



drawn from cast of
Cyrus Dallin sculpture
at Hawthorne School
Helena - by Hobart York

Jefferson Forks, Armsstead, Montana where occurred the dramatic meeting
between Lewis and Clark and Sacajawea's people, the Shoshoni - August 17, 1805.

A Report and Recommendations Presented to the Honorable Tim Babcock Governor, State of Montana

by

Montana Governor's Commission on Status of Women
1967

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* * * * *

The Honorable Tim Babcock
Governor, State of Montana
State Capitol
Helena, Montana

Dear Governor Babcock:

It is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that we submit this report of the Commission on the Status of Women, which you appointed in November 1965. We consider it an honor to have served on this Commission.

Our tenure has not been without misfortune and sadness. Within the first year, Mrs. Jane Bukvich became seriously ill and died on January 31, 1967. We were greatly grieved over the untimely loss of this excellent young member. Shortly after her appointment, Miss Mary Moore resigned from the Commission, due to the press of business. Mr. Robert Thompson later was transferred by the Telephone Company to their head office in Denver, and Dr. Marjory Brooks took an assignment outside of Montana, which necessitated the resignation of these valuable members.

We held six meetings, one of which was a day-long workshop on the campus of the University of Montana. Here we had the benefit of excellent advice and assistance from members of the University faculty on our various panels.

Six areas which we considered of particular interest to Montana women have been explored: legal treatment of women in regard to political and civil rights; women as volunteer workers; working opportunities and problems of women in rural areas; state labor laws dealing with hours, wages and working conditions; policies and practices with respect to education, counseling and job training of women; and availability of child care facilities for working mothers.

Our report is a summary of our findings and recommendations in these six fields.

We trust our work has developed some thought-provoking ideas whereby the women of Montana, in all walks of life, can become more effective citizens, sharing to the fullest

their responsibilities in today's society and insuring full realization of their rights and potentials.

We thank you for your interest and cooperation.

Most sincerely,

THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Edna J. Hinman
Mrs. Edna J. Hinman, Chairman

* * * * *

STATEMENT OF THE
HONORABLE TIM BABCOCK
GOVERNOR OF MONTANA

"The Governor's Commission on the Status of Women is a step to inform the citizens of the State of Montana of women's role in the governmental, civic and recreational development in the state a trail leading to new discovery for those who wish to avail themselves."

Tim Babcock

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, the State of Montana, in continuing to improve the economic condition of all of our citizens, must utilize the highest skills of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the women of the State of Montana have made outstanding contributions to the growth and welfare of this state and have made further contributions to the social advancement of our state; and

WHEREAS, the full utilization of women's talents and the full realization of women's rights as full citizens should be respected and enhanced in this full partnership; and

WHEREAS, women's opportunity to fulfill their business and professional aspirations should be assured, as well as the development of their talents and capabilities, free from prejudice based on sex; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States of America has recognized the distinguished service of women through the creation of the President's Commission on the Status of Women;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tim Babcock, Governor of the State of Montana, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby order and direct the establishment of the Montana Governor's Commission on the

STATUS OF WOMEN

Said Commission to serve until it makes its recommendations as hereinafter provided.

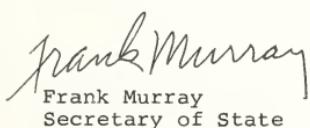
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Montana to be affixed.

(SEAL) DONE at the City of Helena, the Capital, this 25th Day of May, in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-five.



Tim Babcock
Governor of Montana

ATTEST:



Frank Murray
Secretary of State

MONTANA GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

The Governor's Commission on the Status of Women for the State of Montana was proclaimed on May 25, 1965.

The State of Montana has long been aware of the part played by pioneer women in the history of the state . . . aware of their role in business, professions, civic and family life.

The pattern of women's lives is changing rapidly. Many women act as the economic "head" of the family, as well as housekeeper. A dual role requires that she be well prepared for the split in her hourly routine.

Believing that the status of women cannot be neatly separated from the status of American society, the goal of this Commission has been to discover and promote means by which women may increase their contribution to society and their personal satisfaction in vocations suited to their needs and interests.

Daily we hear of the problem of discrimination against women, the plea for equal rights, the "battle of the sexes." This Commission emphasizes that Montana women, by and large, are striving only to share the responsibilities of full citizenship, to strengthen family life by providing opportunities for mothers and wives to participate actively in affairs outside the home and, where necessary or desirable, to help fulfill the economic responsibilities which exist in every home today. Now that substantial formal and legal bases for equality exist, we recognize that the burden for ending vestigial discrimination is on women themselves. If women in numbers step forward to offer and insist on full participation, the entire society will benefit.

The consensus of the Commission is that Montana law presents no significant legal barriers to the advancement of women. Women are essentially hindered by attitudes, first, the long-standing traditional attitude toward the role of women in the family, the community

and our society in general; and, secondly, the view of the role of woman in her own eyes. With few exceptions, equality before law is a fact. It now remains for woman to take advantage of the opportunities offered and meet the challenges of her life and society's. To help woman achieve equality, encouragement is probably needed more than legislation.

In assuming the responsibility given them and in developing a report and recommendations the Commission did not study all of the problems confronting women in Montana, as this would have been an overwhelming task. Rather, the Commission selected topics which seemed appropriate with regard to employment practices and trends in areas worthy of immediate consideration.

This is a summary report of the Commission's findings.

* * * * *

AREA 1 -- LEGAL TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN REGARD
TO POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS

We recognize that Montana, being urban by definition but rural in character, still offering frontiers in industry and development of natural resources, and being both spacious and sparsely populated, is unique in its problems and potential.

Historically, Montana has been in a position of leadership among the states in providing civil and political equality for women. Women were voting in Montana before the national suffrage amendment was adopted. The first woman to serve in the U. S. Congress was a Montana Representative. In state and local government, women have held a number of positions of major responsibility throughout the last fifty years.

As voters, Montana women in 1960 ranked second in the nation both in numbers of eligible voters who were registered and in numbers of those registered who actually voted.

In addition to voting and holding public office, women in this state may serve on juries, own and control property individually, sue and be sued.

The principal questions in regard to the citizenship role of Montana women would seem to be those that occur nationally: (1) Is there a slight but significant degree of civil discrimination remaining in Montana Codes? And, (2), if it is concluded, as seems likely, that women are not yet taking maximum advantage of their public opportunities nor full equal responsibility for the management of public affairs, in what ways should they be encouraged to do so?

The report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and reports of other State Commissions have suggested that governmental employment of women can reasonably be taken as an index of and example in general employment practices. A description of offices and positions currently held by women in state and local government and of the availability of governmental employment would seem to promise some useful information.

The single suggestion of the Commission for legislation has to do with bringing Montana codes into agreement with Federal law and with legislative review of current statutes.

It is the recommendation of this Commission that the Montana Fair Employment Practices Act be amended to read:

"The right to be free from discrimination because of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin is recognized as, and declared to be, a civil right."

The prevention of discrimination on the basis of sex as an integral part of this Montana Act would agree with the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, which provides basic equality of opportunity for employment and would also prevent sex discrimination in those areas which are not presently covered by the Federal law, such as employees of state and local governments and businesses employing fewer than twenty-five people.

An amended Montana Fair Employment Practices Act should provide for equality in employment and compensation without sex discrimination. To assure that the intent of such a modified Act could be realized under existing State Labor Laws, it would be advisable for the State Legislature to study these laws and determine whether there are outmoded restrictions existing which prevent women from reaching their full potential in employment.

It is not the intention of this Commission to suggest that valid protective laws be eliminated but rather that a determination be made to ascertain whether these laws are relevant to present-day technology and to the expanding role of women in our economy.

The Commission believes that there is little legal or political discrimination in Montana laws and that Montana and Federal laws adequately provide for fair and equal treatment for men and women, but that more study and consideration should be given to compliance with the laws and to the equality of opportunities for employment of women in local and state government.

* * * * *

AREA 2 -- WOMEN AS VOLUNTEER WORKERS

It has been said, with a good deal of justification, that community volunteers and organizations of volunteers are more than partly an American invention. Whether the invention springs from our frontier experience, as some claim, or from other historical sources, the volunteering of time, effort, talent and money to maintain and improve community and individual well-being has become traditional in our society as a part of civic responsibility. In fact, the dependence of churches, schools, youth organizations, health and welfare agencies and cultural groups on volunteers, especially women volunteers, has come to be taken almost for granted. And yet, there are probably no more than a handful of other nations that can view such contributions of voluntary activity and interest as less than miraculous.

As American society changes, as community institutions and agencies become increasingly professionalized and specialized, the basis of voluntary activity changes, too, in regard to what needs to be done, how it is to be done, and who is to do it. There continue to be more jobs to be done than there are funds or professional staff to do them. This gap must, increasingly, be filled by trained volunteers in order to meet the social needs of communities effectively. New ways of work will have to be devised to make possible the best use of this womanpower. The changes bespeak the need for energetic joint planning and coordination.

It is suggested that, to provide new and increased opportunities for volunteers and to make volunteer service continuously attractive and satisfactory to Mortara women, all voluntary agencies and institutions that rely on women volunteers:

- (1) Reevaluate their programs in order to offer volunteers new and more challenging opportunities to develop their talents and derive satisfaction from volunteer service.
- (2) Provide better volunteer education and training to assure more valuable contributions and leadership development and in order to help the volunteer relate her specific tasks and tangible contributions to the over-all work of the agency and the community.
- (3) Give more attention to the establishment of Volunteer Bureaus at the local level, to assure every interested woman an opportunity to contribute to community life and, at the same time, to grow as an individual.

* * * * *

AREA 3 -- WORKING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

Farm and ranch women are generally closely associated as active working partners in the family businesses. Traditionally an independent group, they have for the most part solved any problems they might have. There are many instances where jobs are available as mother's helpers or ranch cooks.

In the rural towns there is no shortage of jobs for women who are steady and willing workers. Businessmen are somewhat reluctant to hire younger girls. This group is less likely to stay on the job long enough to make the necessary training period worthwhile.

Women in rural businesses have no legal barriers, and we find those who are successful livestock ranchers as well as owners and operators of a variety of businesses such as real estate, insurance, cafes and shops. There seems to be no discrimination because of sex.

The one very interesting part of the study concerns Indian women. Here is the one facet of rural life that does need help and much encouragement. The sorry plight of the Indian is the direct result of poor governmental policy and administration.

The primary need for Indian women is education - both academic and vocational. The need for training in employable skills is evident. Equally important is the need for home economics training to enable the girls to integrate into larger communities with confidence. Those whose academic possibilities are superior should be encouraged to go on to higher education in professional fields. Increased efforts to publicize the many courses available at schools such as Northern Montana College or Custer County Junior College would be a help to many girls in rural areas. Also it is desirable that such schools have boarding departments.

In recent years there has been some progress and improvement. There is yet a long way to go for the Indian girl or woman. There are no legal barriers here, nor really much racial discrimination. It is instead a problem of lack of understanding and information, compounded by cultural clash. Without more education and employment opportunities, this can change only little. All of us need to appreciate and understand this much-neglected segment of Montana's population, and the contribution the Indian could make to our culture, work force, and society in general.

* * * * *

AREA 4 -- STATE LABOR LAWS DEALING WITH HOURS, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

A revolution is occurring today in the life patterns of women and girls. The young girl today can anticipate a very different way of life from that of her grandmother or even her mother.

The need for increased family income to help meet the higher cost of educating children, health care, and the wider variety of goods and services considered essential to the present-day American standard of living leads more and more women to seek paid employment.

Increasingly women are seeking the right to choose how they will make their contribution to their family and their community.

Statistics show that:

Eight out of ten women will be employed at some time in their lives ... a thought-provoking statement for educators and for all areas of employment planning.

In 1900 the average woman worker was single and 28 years old. In 1964 the average woman worker was married and 41 years old. Nationally, in 1900 five million women were working; in 1963 twenty-three million women were working. It is predicted that in the 1970's this 23 million is going to be increased by 25%, which will mean that an estimated 34% of all workers will be women.

Most jobs that women hold are in the low-paid categories. In 1961 earnings of women working full-time averaged only about 60% of what men earned. These national figures are reflected directly in the Montana situation.

The Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (which sets a minimum and maximum wage for occupations in interstate commerce) excepts most workers in hotels, motels, restaurants, laundries, non-profit organizations and certain retail establishments. This involves a large percentage of the female labor market.

In 1963 an estimated six million women were employed in intrastate work not covered by minimum wage legislation. Montana has no minimum wage law. Montana does not have a law which establishes the principle of equal pay for comparable work.

Turnover in women's employment is greater in younger age groups and in the low-paid occupations. Middle-age ranges and women in the 40's show a low turnover rate.

Nationally, less than .5% of the employed women in the United States in 1960 earned \$10,000 or more, whereas during the same year 7% of all employed males were earning over \$10,000. The percentages for Montana are almost the same.

In April 1960, 73,400 Montana women were at work or looking for work, 21,000 (or 44%) more than in April of 1950 (the national increase was only 35%). During the same decade the number of men in Montana's labor force actually declined by some 4,600 workers, or 2.5%.

What are the characteristics of these 73,000 plus women?

About 3/5 were married and living with their husbands.
One-fifth were widowed, divorced, or separated from
their husbands.

One-fifth were single.

About two-thirds were employed as clerical or sales workers
or as service employees: waitresses, cooks, household
workers, etc.

There were few professional workers besides teachers and
nurses.

The largest group was 35-44 years old: women 45-55 years
old were second in numbers.

According to the U. S. Department of Labor, 1960: The median number of school years completed by all women 14 years of age and over was 11.9 years. One out of 20 had earned a college degree. One out of 10 had less than 8 years of formal education.

Montana's Department of Labor is responsible for administration of the following laws: Child Labor, Equal Pay, Hours of Work, Laws for Women, Prevailing Wage, Wage Payment and Mediation and Conciliation. The Department has a single Administrator appointed by the Governor, with \$76,326 appropriated for each year of the 1965-67 biennium. (One-half of these funds go to the Montana State Apprenticeship Council). The Commission recommends that the resources of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry be expanded to compile, evaluate and disseminate information about employed women and opportunities for training and employment and to assure compliance with law.

The Commission recommends that the Montana Fair Employment Practices Act be modified to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex. Such a modified Act would provide for prevention of discrimination in both wage payments and work assignments and would encourage equality for employed women.

The Commission recommends that existing State and Local Agencies involved in employment be provided with all information regarding employment, education, vocational training, scholarships, loans, etc., which are available for women.

The Commission heartily endorses and supports State and Community efforts to bring new, clean industries into Montana and other efforts which are designed to increase employment in Montana.

The Commission has been privileged to learn of the expanding role of domestic services, vocational-type courses and child care facilities which are being offered in the State of Montana and we heartily endorse the continuation of such programs.

The War Manpower Act and similar training programs are presently being used to provide a source of training for Montana women and the Commission recommends that these programs be continued in cooperation with State and Local programs.

For progress to be realized it is imperative that women's organizations throughout the State become interested in the problems of women. A vital role of this Commission should be to enlist the aid of these organizations in a combined educational effort to influence the attitudes of employment agencies and employers in general and develop a better understanding of problems of employed women.

The State and Federal Training Programs which have been developed to provide an opportunity for self-improvement should be continued and encouraged wherever possible.

The present State Labor Laws originally designed to protect women should be thoroughly reviewed in an effort to determine whether these laws prevent women from reaching their full potential in employment. The Commission does not recommend eliminating protective laws but rather that these laws should not be restrictive.

The Commission should encourage and develop a positive program of evaluation and enlightenment by finding ways to publicize effectively the Status of Women in Montana.

* * * * *

AREA 5 -- POLICIES AND PRACTICES WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION
COUNSELLING AND JOB TRAINING OF WOMEN

The sub-committee to investigate policies and practices with respect to education, counselling and job training of women in Montana began its work by making a survey of these policies and practices among selected large employers in Montana. The answers to the survey questions indicate a favorable climate of employment of women for jobs for which they are qualified and which they are physically able to perform; however, many employed women have expressed to the sub-committee the following concerns:

1. Whether or not women are being paid on the basis of their competence.
2. Whether seemingly unfavorable stereotyped barriers and attitudes towards women workers sometimes prevent promotion of women to management positions.
3. Whether positive aspects of advancing women to management positions are stressed enough; for example, the favorable absentee rate of mature women reentering the labor market after their child-bearing years.
4. Whether there is a tendency to stigmatize all women workers if one woman is promoted to a top level job and fails in its performance.
5. Whether there are sufficient counselling services that not only point out job information but also assist the woman applicant to assess her abilities, her physical capacities, her need for further education, and her job preference.

* * * * *

AREA 6 -- AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

FACILITIES FOR WORKING MOTHERS

One out of every three mothers is employed outside her home. Two out of five working mothers have children under six; two out of three have children under 18. Nine out of ten working mothers who have children under three, hold part-time jobs.

For the benefit of children, mothers and society, the need for and establishment of child care services of the highest quality should be a prime consideration.

Ideally, day care should provide more than mere custodial care for the child ... it should be a family development center with trained personnel and parent participation. Facilities must meet proper standards, whether maintained in homes or in day care centers. Fees must be scaled to the parents' ability to pay. The Commission believes that working mothers should receive adequate tax deductions for child care expense, commensurate with the income.

Montana passed a day care licensing law in 1963, which has improved standards in many aspects. Gradually all child care facilities in the state are being inspected and required to become licensed. An Advisory Committee under the direction of the State Department of Public Welfare is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the act. "Family Day Care Homes" may serve from three to six children of separate families; "Day Care Centers" serve seven or more children.

The Commission recognizes the fundamental responsibility of mothers and homemakers, and society's stake in strong family life. Without doubt, the improvement of child care facilities in Montana is one of the very important problems facing working mothers and one which warrants continued attention.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION

Direction-finding and identification of specific possible areas of improvement has been the goal of the Commission. Without the resources to conduct a full-dress study, the Commission has addressed itself to such perplexing questions as: How, if at all, does the status of women differ from the status of the society in which women live? If the status of women is lower than that of men after at least a half century of legal and political equality and educational opportunity, then why and in what ways?

It seems clear that economic opportunity for women is available far beyond the supply of qualified women. If discrimination exists, it is usually a discrimination of attitudes rather than of policy. In Montana, as elsewhere, women who feel the weight of social attitudes thwarting achievement or advancement are most often those who are a permanent part of the business and professional world and who, in subtle ways, find their pathways to career realization poorly rewarded or choked off at the second or third managerial or administrative levels. Individual women have proved, of course, that the hurdles of attitude can be surmounted given patience, skill, determination, dependability, good health and good humor far beyond the measure required of male competitors.

Of a different order are the difficulties of women who either must hold a job while raising children or who enter the labor market at middle age after giving their early adult lives to their families. Usually not possessing the credentials necessary for skilled employment, nor having the time and money or information or encouragement to secure them, these women are frequently relegated to unskilled service jobs with poor pay and little satisfaction -- or to welfare. It is in this problem area that government, business, labor and the professions might devote a most productive effort. Ways of meshing child-rearing with income-producing, satisfying careers must be devised. The problem is almost impossible for the women concerned to solve individually. The alternatives to concentrated thought and effort are ever-increasing welfare burdens and generations of wasted talent and ability.

Recommendations of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women are found in the body of the report. In summary, they are these:

1. Education, Counselling and Training

- a. Montana women need to be better informed about the training and job opportunities that presently

exist. To this end, the Commission recommends that the Montana Department of Labor and Industry be expanded to be able to compile, evaluate and disseminate information about women in the labor market and about opportunities for training and employment in the state. This agency is also charged with enforcing the laws prohibiting discrimination and should have increased resources to enable it to assure statewide compliance.

- b. Montana women need enlarged opportunities for continuing education in all areas of the state, both urban and rural. Problems are especially severe for Indian women, and the seriousness of these problems warrant special and immediate attention.
2. Legal

The Commission recommends amendment of the Montana Fair Employment Practices Act to include freedom from discrimination because of sex and to bring the statute into line with the Federal Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968.

3. Child Care

The Commission recommends that the government of the State of Montana concern itself with the improvement and expansion of facilities for the day care of children of working mothers.

* * * * *

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. Knute Bergan, Director of Indian Affairs, Helena

Dr. Marjory Brooks, Montana State University, Bozeman (former Commission member)

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